



Ohio Recovery Housing

Preparing for Flu Season 2021-2022

Ohio
Recovery
Housing

Introduction

Public health officials are encouraging everyone to take preventative action against seasonal influenza. COVID 19 is still impacting our health care system. Preventing spread of seasonal influenza not only stops people from getting a serious illness, it also saves health care resources so they can be used to address the COVID 19 pandemic.

This document provides tips and strategies for recovery homes to reduce spread of seasonal influenza.

The situation changes rapidly, and it is possible that new recommendations and resources may become available.

This document is not intended to replace the advice of state or local health departments or legal counsel. This document is intended to be reviewed in coordination with other quality standards and best practice recommendations that have been made by the National Alliance of Recovery Residences and Ohio Recovery Housing, the Ohio state affiliate of NARR. It is important to keep track of any public health orders that may be issued by the state or your local government. It is important that you become aware of these orders and help explain what these orders mean to your residents.

Share Accurate Information

- Use the [Ohio Department of Health Flu Fighter Tools](#) to provide accurate information on influenza
- Share the [CDC "Take 3" Actions to Fight the Flu](#)

Encourage your staff, volunteers and residents to get the seasonal flu vaccine. The single best way to prevent the seasonal flu is a vaccination.

- The seasonal flu vaccine is available for 2020
- [The CDC recommends](#) that everyone over 6 months old get a flu vaccine every year, with some rare exceptions.
- While it is never too late to get the vaccine, [it is recommended by the CDC](#) to get the vaccine by the end of October.
- Specific populations are especially encouraged to get the flu vaccine.
- [Guidance on who should get a flu vaccine is available on the CDC Website.](#)
- If staff, residents or volunteers have concerns about getting the flu vaccine or want to know about their specific risks due to age or other health conditions, they should contact their health care provider and follow their guidance.
- There are some misconceptions about the flu vaccine. [The CDC has provided factual information regarding common misconceptions.](#) You can share this information with those who may be concerned and encourage them to talk with their health care provider about their individual concerns.
- Use the [Flu Shot Finder](#) to help find a location nearest you to get the flu vaccine
- Contact your local pharmacy to see if they can work with you to set up an on-site visit to provide vaccines to interested staff, residents and volunteers.
- Contact your local [Federally Qualified health center](#) to learn more about how to connect residents to a flu vaccine.
- There is assistance available for individuals that cannot afford an influenza vaccination

Remind staff, residents and volunteers of healthy habits

Recovery homes have already implemented protocols on handwashing, cleaning, visitors, and other policies that are designed to stop the spread of COVID 19¹. Many of these practices will also help reduce the spread of seasonal influenza, including:

¹ See Ohio Recovery Housing Best Practice Guides for additional resources on these topics <https://www.ohiorecoveryhousing.org/best-practice-guides>

Avoid close contact with people who are sick

- Remind those who are feeling ill that they should follow your home's isolation protocols².
- Tell any staff, volunteers, or visitors to stay home if they are not feeling well

Cover your nose and mouth

- Provide disposable tissues for residents to use to cover their nose and mouth if they are coughing or sneezing.
- Place tissues in common areas of the home, such as the living room, bathroom, kitchen and dining areas, as well as in any areas that are reserved for visitors.
- Ensure that there is a supply of disposable tissues in the home at all times³.
- Encourage the use of disposable tissues instead of hands or arms whenever possible to help keep hands clean.

Handwashing

- Recovery homes have been encouraging increased handwashing in their homes, but everyone needs reminders to continue healthy habits
- Strategies that have worked to remind people to wash their hands include
- Establishing a routine where hands are washed at specific times including
 - before they leave
 - when they return home
 - after using the restroom
 - before, during and after preparing food
 - after touching garbage
 - after they sneeze or cough and dispose of a tissue
- Posting signs or reminders in common areas, such as on the refrigerator or the bathroom door.
- If residents in your home are comfortable with alcohol-based hand sanitizers, place these in common areas, such as on the living room end tables, the kitchen table, resident nightstands, and by the entrances and exits. Ask residents to use the sanitizer whenever they see it to ensure frequent cleaning of hands.
- Refer to the CDC Guidance on handwashing, [soap](#) and [hand sanitizers](#) to ensure you are using appropriate and safe products.

² For best practice guidance, see "How do I keep other residents in my home from getting sick?" on [the Ohio Recovery Housing Best Practice Guidance page](#) for example protocols, strategies, and resources for keeping residents engaged virtually while they are physically separated from others.

³ Keeping paper products stocked can be a challenge if such products are still in short supply in your community. See the Ohio Recovery Housing Best Practice Guidance "[I am unable to buy enough supplies at the store, what do I do?](#)" for more information and resources on addressing this potential issue.

- Ask one staff member (or one resident to volunteer in more peer led environments) to check the handwashing supplies in the home daily. Have them check each sink or hand sanitizer location to ensure that it is stocked appropriately. Have them contact you if supplies are low³.
- Show gratitude for staff and/or residents if they are engaging in frequent handwashing. Let them know that their behavior is making a difference. Simple acts of gratitude help encourage people to continue with healthy habits.

Maintain a Clean Environment

- Recovery homes have already stepped up their cleaning protocols due to COVID-19.
- Keeping up a rigorous cleaning routine can be tiresome for anyone and it is important to ensure that you keep maintaining a clean environment.
- Ensure that the home has a supply of [EPA list N Disinfectants](#) at all times³.
- Ask one staff member (or one resident to volunteer in more peer led environments) to check the cleaning supplies in the home daily and notify you if supplies are running low.
- Create a checklist of surfaces that need to be cleaned frequently and have staff (or residents in peer led environments) use these checklists to ensure all surfaces are clean (examples: light switches, doorknobs, TV remote, community bathroom high touch surfaces, etc.)
- Show gratitude for staff and residents who are keeping up with rigorous cleaning routines. Let them know that their behavior is making a difference. Simple acts of gratitude can help encourage people to continue with healthy habits.

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Last Updated: September 2020